

# taking care of business

## Green Day Producer Visits NZ

The Reprise V.P. of A&R **Rob Cavallo** visited Warner Music NZ in September. He was fresh out of the recording studio where he had just produced the Green Day and Muffs albums. Cavallo is one of the few A&R folk who also have the title "Staff Producer" on their business card. The Green Day album *Insomniac* is preceded by the single 'Geek Stink Breath'. Cavallo promised a Green Day interview for *RipItUp* to coincide with the album's release.

## MCA Opens in Auckland

The New Zealand office for MCA opened October 1 at Level 1, 114-116 Ponsoby Road. The labels represented by MCA Music NZ include **MCA, Geffen, Uptown, Chess, Radioactive** and Steven Spielberg's **Dream Works**. MCA also has two new labels started by ex Warners USA executives: **Krasnow Entertainment** and Doug Morris's **Rising Tide**. MCA is also expected to purchase the **Interscope** label from Atlantic, as the Time-Warner group shed their controversial rap artists. Staff appointed are **George Ash** General Manager (ex BMG), **Marlene Barwick** Financial Controller (ex Sony), **Lisa Williams** Marketing Manager (ex Warners), **Nicky Jarvis** Promotions Manager (ex Warners), **Grant Kearney** Promotions & Marketing Assistant (ex BMG) and **Natalie Batten** Office Administrator. BMG will continue to sell and distribute MCA product in New Zealand. To contact MCA phone (09) 376-2889 or fax (09) 376-6353.

## Recording Artists & Creative NZ

Since the Arts Council changed its name to Creative NZ the New Artists Recording Grants Scheme has evolved. The March and September deadlines have gone and now grants are no longer limited to a musician's first release. Artists still have to send demo tapes, a budget and lyric sheets and have a performance track record and support from a record company. The 1996 closing dates are February 16 and August 7. For further info write to Creative NZ, PO Box 3806, Wellington or phone (04) 473-0880.

## Modern Songwriting Workshop

Auckland Centre for Continuing Education is running a summer songwriting workshop January 5 to 7 at Auckland University. The tutors are Bernard Griffen of Sun Pacific Music and Arthur Baysling of APRA. Course fee is \$170. Further info (09) 373-7599 ext 7831.

## 1995 Waikato Rock Awards

This year's Waikato Rock Awards has nine categories. Entries for the first category, Live Band, close October 10. The other categories close October 31 — Music Video, Original Song, Album, Best Recorded Work, Best Presentation of Recorded Work, Female Vocalist, Male Vocalist and Biggest Contribution to Waikato Music. The Awards are presented by Zoo Studio and Hark Records. For entry forms phone (07) 8383-063.

## Musical Chairs

Festival has created two label manager positions — **Shirley Charles** looks after the Mushroom, White and Wildside labels while **Sarah MacDonnell** (ex bFM) is Label Manager for the Liberation, Flying Nun and Deepgrooves labels. The new Press / Promotions person is **Francesca Nixon** ... EMI promotions positions are Promotions Manager **Bridgit Bolton-Riley** (ex Festival) and Promotions Assistant **Ben Hill** (ex bFM) ... also at EMI **Sherie O'Neill** who was Marketing Co-Ordinator has now been appointed the EMI Label Manager ... **Simon Coffey** is now Promotion Manager at bFM and new Office Manager is **Ian Hughes**.

## NZ ON AIR Music Videos

The acts who have received NZ On Air video grants at the August meeting are:

**Teremoana** Four Woman (BMG)  
**Sulata** Find Yourself (Deepgrooves)  
**Grace** Heart Of Stone (Deepgrooves)  
**Three The Hard Way** B All Right (Deepgrooves)  
**Ermehn** Nuttin' Personal (Deepgrooves)  
**Jordan Reyne** Millstones (Deepgrooves)  
**Matty J Ruys** Cruisin' (EMI)  
**The Bats** Afternoon In Bed (Flying Nun)  
**King Loser** '76 Comeback (Flying Nun)  
**Jacqui Keelan-Davey** Nobody (Hark)  
**The Nixons** Laughing (Pagan)  
**Greg Johnson** If I Swagger (Pagan)  
**Barry Saunders** Little Things (Pagan)  
**Lole** Just Wanna (Papa Pacific)  
**Field Style** Orator Hibiscus Milk (Papa Pacific)  
**Wonderkind** Destiny Change (Probe)  
**Strawpeople** Turn Of The Century (Sony)  
**Upper Hutt Posse** Can't Get Away (Tangata)  
**Moana & The Moahunters** Give It Up Now (Tangata)  
**Dam Native** Behold (Tangata)  
**Emma Paki** Don't Do It (Virgin)  
**Temuera Morrison** Waiata Poi (Virgin)  
**The Exponents** Lulu (Warners)  
**Pumpkinhead** Nark (Wildside)  
**Nothing At All** Something At Last (Zero)

## NZ ON AIR Kiwi Hit Disc

The tracks selected for the Kiwi Hit Disc No.16 are:

**Matty J Ruys** Cruisin' (EMI)  
**Grace** Heart Of Stone (Deepgrooves)  
**Strawpeople** Turn Of The Century (Sony)  
**Ngairu** The Way I Feel About You (Festival)  
**Teremoana** Four Woman (BMG)  
**Sulata** Find Yourself (Deepgrooves)  
**Emma Paki** Don't Do It (Virgin)  
**D-Faction** Down In The Boondocks (Southside)  
**Lole** Just Wanna (Papa Pacific)  
**Moana & The Moahunters** Give It Up Now (Tangata)  
**Temuera Morrison** Waiata Poi (Virgin)  
**Three The Hard Way** B All Right (Deepgrooves)  
**Purest Form** If I Fell (Madame X)  
**Margaret Urlich** Every Little Thing (Sony)  
**Wayne Mason** Walking That View Around (Raging Goose)  
**King Biscuit** For This Moment (Hark)  
**Dragon** Are You Old Enough (Roadshow)

## NZ ON AIR Radio Hits Funding

The following NZ artists qualified due to "significant airplay" achieved, for funding by the NZ On Air Radio Hits Scheme:

**Southside Of Bombay** Umbadada (Pagan)  
**Igelese** Groovalation (Papa Pacific)  
**Jan Hellriegel** Manic (Warners)  
**Second Child** Crumble (Wildside)



# Urge Overkill Boy, You'll be a Superstar Now

It's the evening of Urge Overkill's one-off Auckland concert, and meanwhile, Mount Ruapehu continues to ominously spit tonnes of shit into the surrounding atmosphere. Urge Overkill drummer Blackie O, although having only arrived in the country the previous day, is up with the play and wonders out loud whether it will really blow.

Urge Overkill may not be spewing ash and volcanic rock up in the air but they have — at least metaphorically — recently exploded on to the popular music scene. For many, the first they had heard of Urge Overkill was that Neil Diamond song on the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack. It may have riled many hardcore Urge Overkill fans, but it sure helped sell Tarantino's film and the accompanying soundtrack, and also pushed Urge Overkill — quite unexpectedly — into the wider public consciousness. The success of 'Girl, You'll be a Woman Soon' came as quite a surprise to the band.

Blackie: "It was kind of weird because we'd recorded that song three years before (on the 10-inch EP *Stull*), and it was only when Quentin Tarantino used it in the film that it became a hit. He had written us a letter to ask whether he could use it, and we'd all seen *Reservoir Dogs* and thought it was a great movie. So, we agreed, but had no idea the song would have such a feature role. For almost three years the song didn't do a thing and then... yeah, it's very bizarre."

Even more bizarre when you realise Urge Overkill have been thrashing out their stuff to audiences in Chicago and beyond for about 10 years now. Their records have always been received reasonably well by the alternative scene, even though the Urge Overkill sound is distinctly a lot poppier than many of the bands they are associated with. Blackie says the recent success of the band has put them in an unusual position.

"We used to be a mainstream band in the underground, and now we're this underground band in the mainstream."

In the mainstream Urge Overkill certainly are, recently touring with Pearl Jam and headlining at major festivals.

Part of the band's success seems to stem from the widely espoused belief that these

guys are *really cool*. Much of the media coverage of Urge Overkill focuses on this supposed 'coolness'. Their love for the kitsch, their knowledge and appreciation of cheesy 70s sounds and their 'zany' dress sense have lead the media into hyping Urge Overkill as three image conscious hipsters, unprecedented in the glamour-free zone which is grunge. The fact one of their songs was associated with film industry cool-equivalent Quentin Tarantino just fuelled this fire.

But is this cooler-than-thou image really what Urge Overkill are all about? Or is it just a big in-joke played on the world by Urge Overkill? Blackie says they don't intentionally put across an image as the saviours of style. They are into all of those things, but it wasn't like part of an Urge Overkill Marketing Strategy or anything like that. If anyone is to blame, it's the media for making a big hurrah about it, and in turn, making Blackie extremely cynical about the media in general.

"It's like now we get written about us [puts on a voice slightly resembling a drawling Citizen Kane]: 'Finally, here comes a band that has injected a well needed dose of style back into the tired waters of grunge.' But the year before it was: 'Artificial bands like Urge Overkill only care about what they wear, and don't really care about the real issues of human experience.'"

"The very things you get criticised for one year are the very things they praise you about the next year. It's hard not to get jaded by the media."

So, it seems likely Urge Overkill will take the reviews of their new album, *Exit the Dragon*, with a grain of salt. The album — the second under the guidance and wide financial umbrella of Geffen — is seen by many as a return to the more melodic roots of the band's earlier recordings. It still rawks — they wouldn't have it any other way — but nowhere near the level of their previous record, *Saturation*.

Blackie says melody has always been important to the Overkill sound. In the mid-80s, when the band was formed, there were two major movements growing out of the ashes of the punk scene.

"You had hardcore bands like Hüsker Dü

and the Exploited and you had a new movement of bands like Red Kross, Dinosaur Jr. and us, who had influences before 1977."

Unfortunately, many of the people associated with the hardcore scene weren't too happy with what they could hear coming from these 'pop' groups.

"A lot of hardcore fans came to hate bands like Dinosaur and Urge because they saw it as punk trying to sell out, which really wasn't the case. We were just people who had grown up in the 70s and experienced both punk *and* bands like the Rolling Stones."

"The average punk saw the Rolling Stones as the anti-Christ and Sid Vicious as their saviour, so what they started doing was going to gigs and beating up the people who were watching these new bands. The way they would do that is by jumping on top of their heads, or by getting up on the stage and dissing the band and then jumping off before someone could get to them. So, originally stage-diving started as hostility, which is why when people tried to stage-dive at Nirvana shows, Kurt would take his guitar and whack them over their heads. Kurt knew what stage-diving really stood for, but the kids didn't."

Blackie acknowledges that stage-diving isn't necessarily an aggro thing these days, but when it was, it did enough to put him off going to gigs for a long time. Instead, the members of Urge Overkill used to spend long sessions in clubs, listening to a lot of black music. Blackie says funk records, especially by Parliament, have had just as important an influence on the band as the Rolling Stones and the Sex Pistols. And let's not forget their obvious love of Neil Diamond, which lead to the covering of 'Girl...', *Pulp Fiction*, etc.

In the future, Urge Overkill may take their involvement in the film industry one step further and actually do a new take on the band-movie thing. But what sort of film would it be?

"It would have to be funny," says Blackie, "but with a bit of drama to it. Like, we'd get caught up with the mob or something. I don't think it'd be too difficult for us to make a movie. We're pretty good at role playing."

That's for sure.

DOMINIC WAGHORN

# Green Day

## Geek Stink Breath

cd single & cassette feature non-lp tracks — free poster while stocks last

# Insomniac

The new album Out October 23